ancestry.com | Landmark, The (Statesville, North Carolina)
1932 › September › 2

"Hoover Cart" Rodeo Attracts Attention

Goldsboro, Aug. 30 — Interest is increasing in the "Hoover Cart" rodeo to be held in Goldsboro Saturday, September 10, following the opening of the tobacco market Tuesday, September 6. More than 50 entries have been registered and new registrations are being received in every mail and from several different counties. From 150 to 200 carts are expected to enter the rodeo.

The contests will begin at 10 o'clock September 10 and prizes will be given to the drivers of the best cart, the most dilapidated, the most unique, the most typical, the largest, the smallest, to the winner of the horse race, the mule race, and the winners in other events to be announced later. Women have been especially invited to enter their carts, there being quite a number of these modern vehicles driven by women of Wayne and adjoining counties.

Every person who enters a cart that day will be a guest at a local moving picture theater, and also will be presented with a prize by a local milling company.

ancestry.com | Landmark, The (Statesville, North Carolina)
1932 › September › 16

'HOOVER - CART' RODEO IS A GREAT SUCCESS.

More Than 300 Vehicles Entered In Event At Goldsboro — Thousands Attend.

Goldsboro, Sept. 12 — The "Hoover - cart" rodeo held in Goldsboro Saturday was a great success, surpassing even the highest hopes of the promoters. More than 300 carts of various and unique models took part in the parade that was many blocks long and thousands of people milled about Center and adjacent streets for hours during the day.

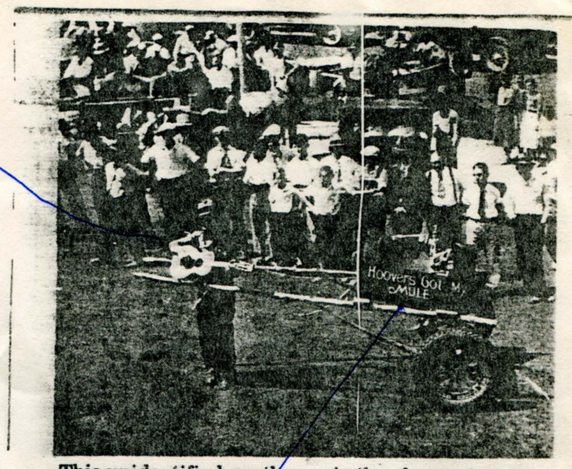
Most of the carts were drawn by mule power but many by horses, oxen, calves, dogs and ponies and one bearing the inscription, "Hoover got my mule" by a man. No two were alike.

While most of the carts were driven by young men, many were driven by women and girls, old men or young boys. Some of the drivers wore costumes like clowns. The sound of bells, horns, music and the braying of mules added to the holiday atmosphere. A tiny cart from Wilson was drawn by a feist dog and another dog did the driving.

The drum and bugle corps of the American legion furnished music and Boy scouts assisted in many ways during the day.

Stunts and clog dancing were given on a raised platform at the intersection of Center and Walnut streets and from this platform the judges

my daddy, J. E. Epps. Christine Epps Gardner



This unidentified gentlemen in the above picture is singing the blues about the depression during Hoover's term in office.

HOOVER GOT MY Mule

September 12, 1932 was a Monday.

September 10, 1932 was a Saturday.

Victoria, Texas

VICTORIA DAILY ADVOCATE, WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, SEPTEMBER 28, 1932.

AME TO HUNDREDS RT LAVACA

K—This is one of news articles writers, represent- for their respec- ill-tide Satchell

ND PARKER

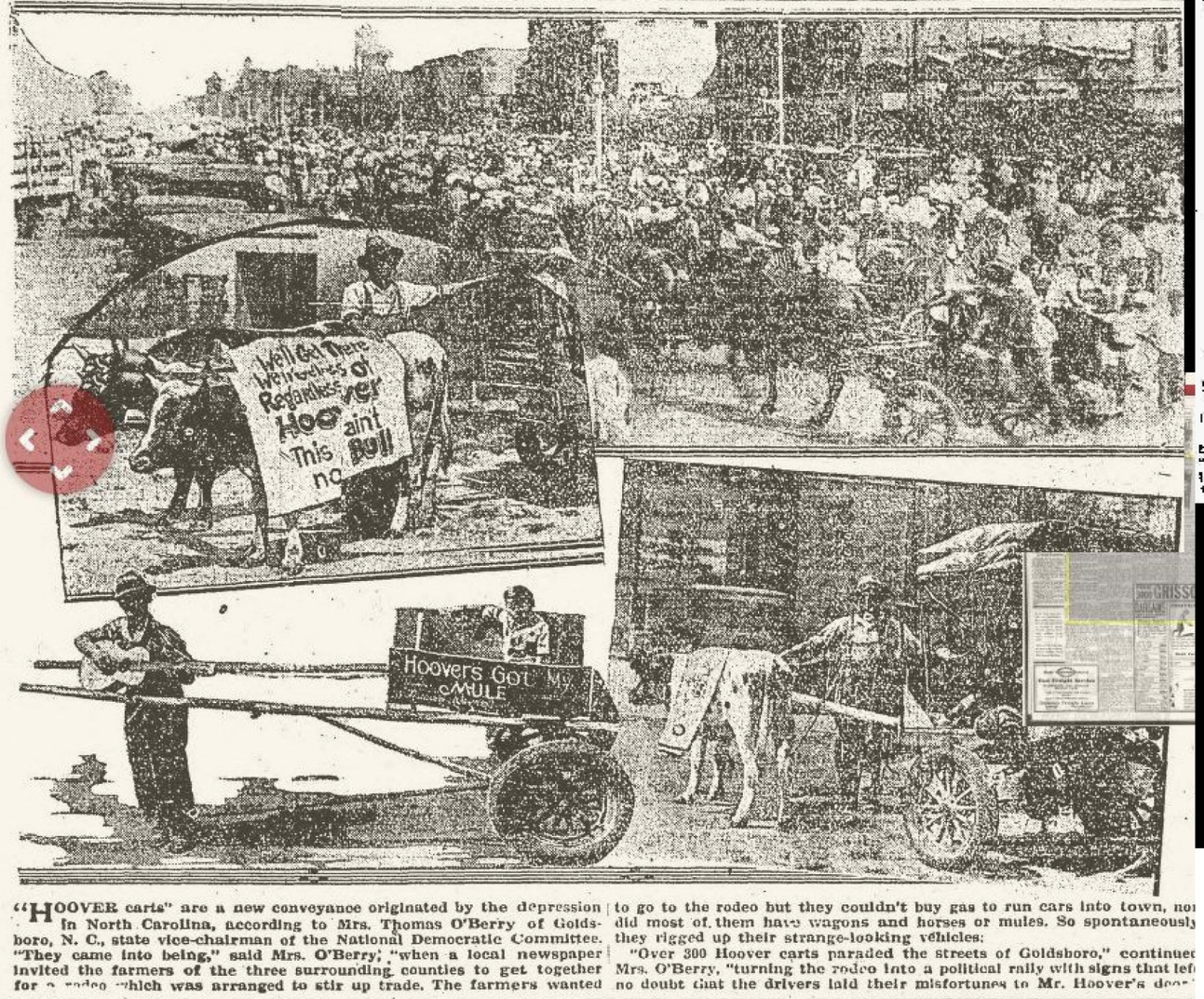
Hoover Carts Replace "Hoovercrats" in North Carolina

"HOOVER carts" are a new conveyance originated by the depression in North Carolina, according to Mrs. Thomas O'Berry of Goldsboro, N. C., state vice-chairman of the National Democratic Committee. "They came into being," said Mrs. O'Berry, "when a local newspaper invited the farmers of the three surrounding counties to get together for a rodeo which was arranged to stir up trade. The farmers wanted to go to the rodeo but they couldn't buy gas to run cars into town, nor did most of them have wagons and horses or mules. So spontaneously they rigged up their strange-looking vehicles.

"Over 300 Hoover carts paraded the streets of Goldsboro," continued Mrs. O'Berry, "turning the rodeo into a political rally with signs that left no doubt that the drivers laid their misfortunes to Mr. Hoover's door."

THE DAILY ARDMOREITE, ARDMORE, OKLAHOMA

Hoover Carts Replace "Hoovercrats" in North Carolina



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The Shelby Dynasty

If one picked up the September 11, 1932, edition of the *News and Observer,* one could easily come away with the impression that society was coming apart. The Raleigh newspaper reported that in Goldsboro 15,000 watched a "Hoover Cart Rodeo." The 300 cannibalized automobiles displayed were powered by North Carolina mules rather than Detroit engines because people could no longer afford gas or tires. Each contestant received a three-pound bag of grits and a free pass to see the Marx Brothers classic film *Horse Feathers*.

Source:
Mt Airy News
12 Sept. 1932

Hoover Carts Galore Are In This State

Raleigh, Sept. 12.—"Hoover carts reminiscent of racing cart days, high wheel cart days, HMT buggy days, and even "The Deacon's One-Horse Shay days are coming to the front in large numbers in an effort to beat the "Hoover depression,' particularly in eastern North Carolina where it is now one of the most usual modes of transportation.

The "Hoover cart" is a simple vehicle, small in initial cost and even smaller in upkeep, and has, it is averred by users, about all the comforts of the automobile. It consists of part of abandoned automobiles and cart or buggies, or other easily constructed requirements. Two old automobile wheels and an axle shafts from an old buggy, or built to order out of poles and a seat attached to axle and shaft with iron or wooden parts holding the seat completes the outfit at very little outlay. Abandoned automobiles and buggies with an hour's work will complete the outfit. Some even operate on rims without tires.

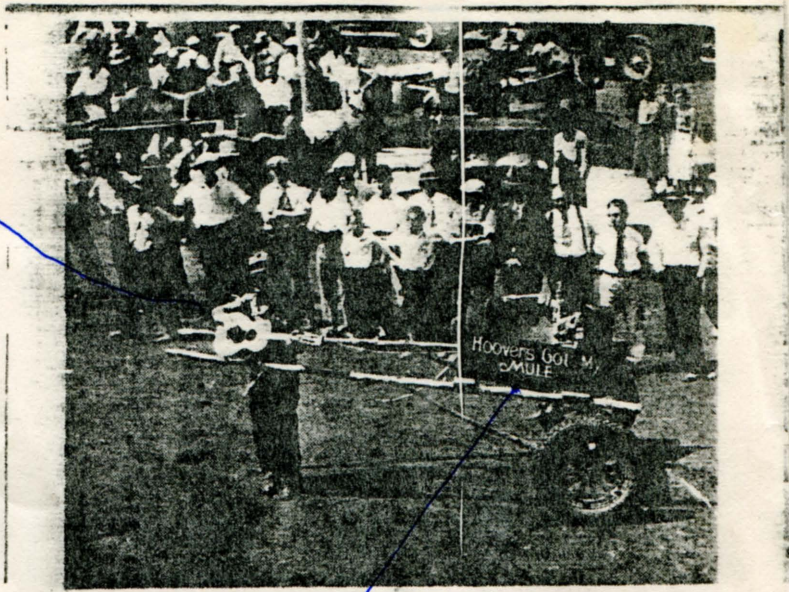
For making short trips, going to market, taking small quantities of farm products or supplies and for taking one or two persons, these "Hoover carts" are entirely satisfactory. "Old Dobbin," almost a prehistoric animal, except for pulling the plow again comes into his own. The outfit is light and is no task for him to handle, and it rides easily and comfortable, even without tires, on the smooth roads. It's going a long way to beat the depression. For, there is practically no upkeep, no parts to buy at high prices, no license required, no gasoline cost, including a seven-cent tax (one to the Hoover administration), and no storage costs, or deterioration, if left in the sun or rain.

"Hoover Cart Rodeos" are being held in several eastern places. One of the most notable was the one staged for Goldsboro Saturday.

The News-Argus, newspaper, is sponsoring the event, including a parade, and had in advance nearly 300 from Wayne and adjoining counties for the day A free theatre ticket and a three-pound bag of grits will go to each driver, while three prizes are given for the best cart, most dilapidated, unique, smallest, largest, funniest, best stunts, mule, horse and ox races, most comfortable looking car, and other events and stunts.

The numbers of entries give some idea of the prevalence of the new mode of transportation made necessary by the depression.

my Daddy, F. E. Epps.
Christine Epps Gardner



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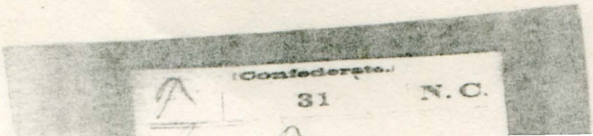
HOOVER GOT MY Mule



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J.A.VINSON
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of Quality
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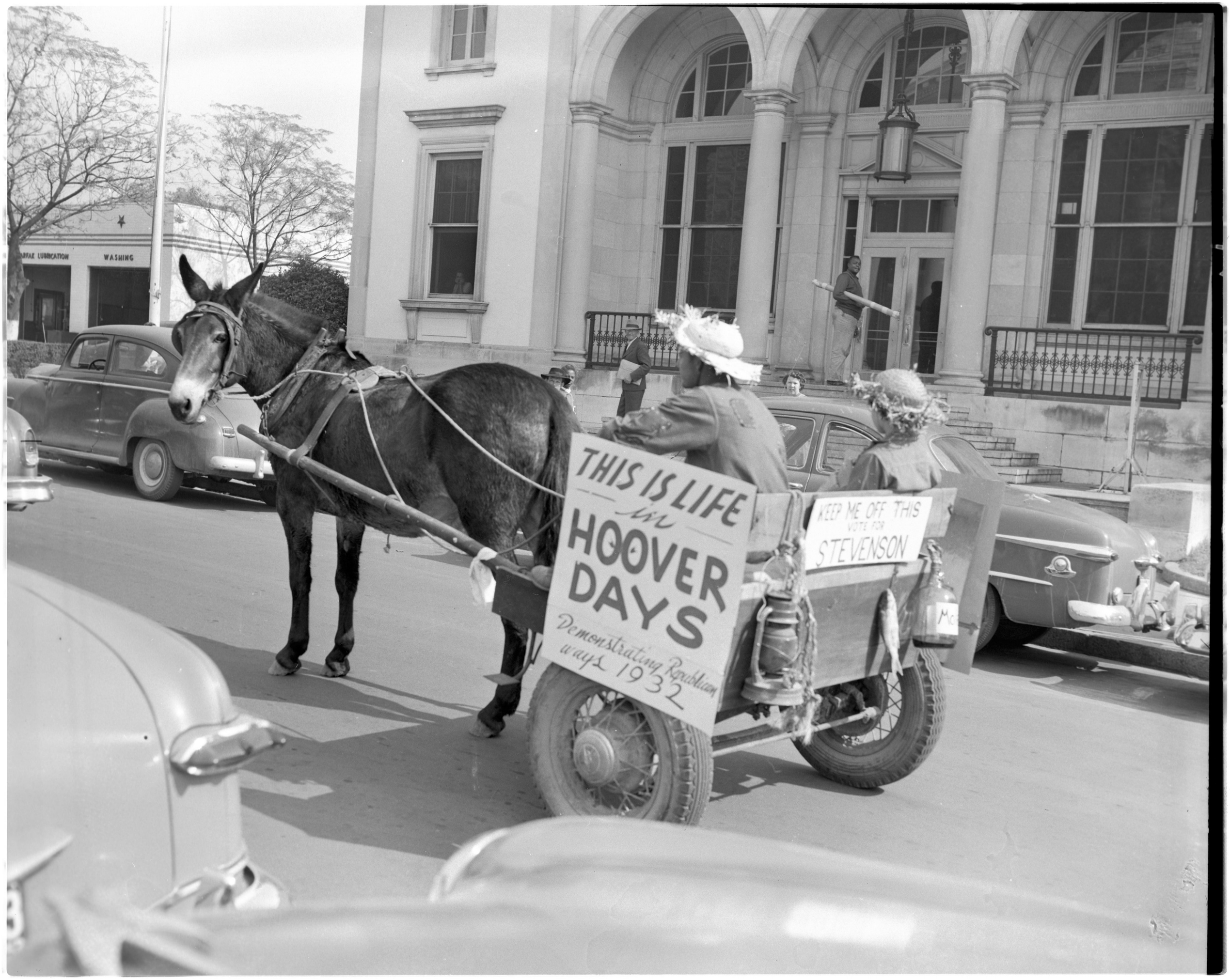
THOMPSON SHOE STORE
MILLER'S GOLDSBORO DRUG CO.
The Rexall Store
Coca-Cola
DRUGS
LUNCH
Lily BEAUTY SHOPPE
CROSLEY
RADIO
SALES and SERVICE

General Outdoor Advertising


WASHING
THIS IS LIFE
HOOVER
DAYS
Demonstrating Republican
ways 1932
KEEP ME OFF THIS
VOTE FOR
STEVENSON

Back To The Futurama-

A Statement by Jeremy Dean

I have always been interested in exploring contemporary issues by deconstructing and re-contextualizing iconic symbols to gain perspective and understanding about the world in which we live. This has been even more important to me in the current state of global economic, environmental, and security instability. Process, history and story are integral to my work that embraces contradiction, irony and the absurd. This project uses an American symbol of power and status to questions our future by looking at a past response to excess and subsequent collapse

CONTEXT: EVERYTHING BOILS DOWN TO ECONOMICS

The excess of the roaring 20's were punctuated by Ford's inexpensive Model T making it possible for virtually everyone to own a car. Realizing that at some point everyone who could afford a car would have one, General Motors (GM) introduced "planned obsolescence" by annually changing its models, allowing for the extravagance of regular new cars and inventing consumerism as we know it. GM also began extending credit through the GM Acceptance Corp at a rate of 30% interest. This occurred at a globally unstable time, when the debate over bank regulation and American consumerism raged. Americans responded to the advertising doctrine of 1926 saying, "Every free-born American has a right to name his own necessities" and the list of necessities grew.

When the stock market crashed in 1929, leading to the Great Depression, indebted Americans defaulted on their loans worsening the depression and found themselves unable to pay for basic goods including gasoline, so their cars sat idle. The solution in the agrarian South became to cut the car in half, attach poles to the front and hitch it to a horse. The resulting contraption became known as a Hoover Cart after President Hoover who was blamed for the depression. Soon the Hoover Cart took off and made its way as far north as Canada (where they where called Bennett Buggies after the Prime-minister). Throughout the 1930's the Hoover Cart becoming a symbol for may of the pain the Great Depression caused and for others, as a social and political symbol for change.

I first learned of the Hoovercart while making a documentary film in Tarboro, North Carolina. The film was an oral history take on the evolution of this small agricultural town through the generations. I was fascinated by the story and the image I saw in my mind of the re-imagined vehicle, this ultimate coping mechanism, and it seamed to me then, as it does now, a monument to the absurd, as only something utilitarian done in prolonged crisis can be. I sat with that image in my mind for years, and would revisit it when a particularly blaring example of American overindulgence confronted my senses. I began to wonder what we would do with all this stuff if it became, through crisis, impossible to use as originally intended. I had grand images of Hoovervilles made out of plasma TV's, like the old depression shanties that used adds form the daily newspaper to cover holes in the wall against the cold, destitute people surrounded by marketing images of things never to be afforded. I began to contemplate the reality of the world we have built for ourselves grinding to a halt and one thing became clear; everything in our modern world depends on energy. In our strive for American individualism and independence, we have quietly cut all ties with the land favoring the convenience of cheap gadgetry and in the process becoming blindly dependent on

energy, mostly oil and most of that, foreign. One has to look no further than the black out of 2005 that crippled New York City and the surrounding area to see how impossible American life would be without energy, and cheap energy at that.

In thinking about our society it is clear that we have collectively bought in to the American idea of “Bigger is better.” This thinking, fed by prosperous times and easily available credit, has given us an explosion of consumer goods, the Mc Mansion, corporations too big to fail, and giant gas guzzling SUVs. We owe much of our recent prosperity to a relatively stable period in history and the availability of cheap oil.

A lot has been made of our dependence on oil and much speculation about how much oil is left on the planet. But one thing is sure, we (US) consume vastly more resources than the rest of the world, and when the developing world catches up with us (as they are working very hard to do), global demand will outpace supply which will cause the price of oil to skyrocket, oil dependent economies (like ours) will collapse, and there will be an explosion of violence as we all fight for resources (to say nothing of the disastrous effects on the environment).

All of this inevitably brings us back to the automobile and though I am not necessarily obsessed with cars or car culture, I am obsessed the idea of the American Dream. It is impossible to talk about one without the other as they are historically and inextricably linked. The promise of America is summed up nicely be this gentleman who lived through the depression.

> “I am 72 years old and been thinking some lately about things that have happened during that span. I see Hoover mentioned a lot in recent weeks but I'll bet most of you don't recall the term "Hoover cart". It was around for some time but I remember it being used most frequently during the Truman/Dewey campaign. Looks like we will need those "carts" again to carry the few bits we have left after this Republican administration finishes with us.
>
> Raising something to eat superseded social concerns in my cashless 1930s boyhood. Along the dirt road that ran in front of our Georgia farmhouse, the farmer rode to town on Saturday on a homemade seat mounted on the rear axle and wheels of a former T-model Ford drawn by a bony mule. The vehicle was known as a Hoover cart in honor of the president who promised two cars in every garage and gave us the Great Depression.”

As the country began to emerge from the Depression politicians and corporations were obsessed with making grandiose predictions about the future. Fashion, Art and Architecture of this era took on a futuristic look, as evidence by Art Deco and the accompanying Streamline Modern movement that took new technology in aerodynamics and ballistics as a design principle to strip down and streamline design, giving the look of sleek futuristic speed. Automobile manufacturers embraced this look wholeheartedly. At the 1939 World's Fair in New York City General Motors unveiled an exhibit entitled "The Futurama" which was a large scale diorama depicting their vision of the future world we would all inhabit and how the automobile would make it possible. In this “brighter and better world of tomorrow” (the imagined future world of 1960) the viewer was confronted with a self-described monument to “the American scheme of living.” “Come,” the omniscient voice of the unseen announcer invites, “Let’s journey into the future… what will we see.”

For a time after WWII the future was very bright for GM and most of America (if you were white) and indeed the automobile made this country. The United States possessed one of the only functioning post war economies and instead of producing military goods, factories began cranking out a plethora of consumer products, including cars, to an eager American consumer. Massive government investment in the highway

interstate system in the 50's and 60's (which was basically the largest subsidy ever handed out to business) created suburbia, caused white flight resulting in large inner city ghettos and led to the very American Dream of a two car family, the house, picket fence, dog named Spot. At one point the 1950's, 1 in 7 jobs were directly related to the auto industry and GM alone represented 10% of the national economy. Adding to its "Planed Obsolescence" strategy, that bit of marketing genius that made the previous years model dreadfully outdated, GM now added the "Ladder of Success." This new marketing strategy effectively put the consumer in a class system according to wealth and social status by the corresponding GM model they could afford – Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick, or Cadillac. In a wordless exchange everyone now knows where everyone else stands, and if one wants to appear to rise socially, simply buy the more expensive, latest brand. With these two marketing ideas "GM was able to weld an existential link between who we are and what we drive, and put the American consumer on the acquisitive treadmill they are panting on yet today."

At this historical time, writes Dan Neil, "GM was more than just the world's largest and most admired corporation; it was the final vindication of the American Way, the perfected and even divinely inspired example of democratic capitalism that stood opposed to the airless atheism and nullity of the Soviet system."

The Golden Age of America to be sure.

So it was no small moment when in 1953 GM President Charles Wilson was tapped to be secretary of defense (It would be Ford's CEO Robert McNamera next). In his confirmation hearing before the Senate Wilson was asked if he thought there might be a conflict of interest, his response made history: " I have always felt that what was good for GM is good for the nation and vice versa." It was as if with this one statement the America corporation and the federal government were once and for all inseparable. (Now the argument can be made that what is good for Goldman Sachs is good for America.) Throughout the 50's and 60's the slogan was repeated with pride, "As General Motors goes, so goes America."

Certainly a company that could achieve all this would last forever, and so would the country that made it all possible…right?

Earlier last year (2009) in the midst of the worst financial disaster to hit this country since the Great Depression, General Motors filed for bankruptcy, and last week the ultimate symbol of American dominance, the HUMMER, was officially closed for good. The irony is that in the early 2000's GM spent millions in developing the EV1, a fully functional electric car, but killed the program to make room for the HUMMER. And now not even the Chinese want the beleaguered brand. GM's problems, however, are not unique and in fact are the same problems facing the nation as a whole at this precarious time.

> "This is the lesson of GM's bankruptcy, and it has little to do with market share and miles per gallon. It's a rebuff of the notion of exceptionalism. Any organization that fails to sufficiently safeguard its means of self-correction and reform, that forsakes long-term investment for short-term gain, that piles up debt year after year, will eventually fail, no matter how grand its history or noble its purpose. If you don't feel the tingle of national mortality in all this, you're not paying attention."

THE PROCESS

For me the symbol that best personifies the arrogant, unsustainable, indulgence of the last era and the inevitable downfall, is the HUMMER H2. This military vehicle turned 9 MPG grocery getter has been called

Back To The Futurama-

A Statement by Jeremy Dean

“An indictment of the American psyche on wheels,” and is clearly consumerism at its peak. By choosing the HUMMER as a symbol to deconstruct, it speaks to the broader culture that bought into this ideology, resulting in the largest financial collapse since the Great Depression and an impending environmental catastrophe.

I believe that the power of this work lays within the evisceration of the object itself and all that it represents. It was therefore very important to me to acquire at market price, a working automobile in the best condition possible. To cut any corners on this point was to me, completely unacceptable. Adding meaning and back story, I bought the car from a dealer, who had just bought it at an auction for bank owned, repossessed vehicles, a further monument to the times. Like my car cutting forefathers I too had to embrace the absurd if I was to make any sense out of the current madness.

I am very interested in work that deals with contradiction, and irony. Like a film director showing the brutal violence of war to make a statement about the horrors of war, I had to embrace excess in the creation of this object to reflect back its ultimate insanity. I very much love this tension, between the beautiful and the dark, between physical attraction and intellectual revulsion, the ultimate guilty pleasure. Optimism is present but checked by the reality of human nature.

My work exits in a continuum of time. It is from the future, but is rooted in the present and connects the past. Taking the logic of the past and putting it in the context of our current economic and environmental disaster, I am making my own satirical prediction of the future- Unless we come up with alternative fuel sources and rethink our reliance on a hyper inflated consumption based oil economy; we may be left with no other options than to hook our cars up to a horse.

As I see it, this is a time machine from the future, from a world destroyed through over consumption. This is my equivalent of GM’s Futurama and the logical conclusion of that thinking, the new “Brighter and better world of tomorrow. Come lets journey into the future… What will we see?” In this future world we will have learned little from the mistakes of the past, repeating the cycle of historical amnesia, human nature will once again be the strongest motivating factor. In this apocalyptic world there will be a small few who possess all the wealth and who desire the best of the best. Energy will be scarce and expensive, but of little concern for the elite who travel in lavishly styled horse carts, a throw back to the Depression Chariot, and an earlier time in history; all of humanity is moving backwards.

THE LAST TREE

When it was first populated by humans, Easter Island was a lush tropical rainforest bearing trees over 80 feet tall, 6 feet in diameter. The land and available food source was so fertile that a complex society soon sprang up on the worlds most remote scrap of land. At the height of its glory, 20,000 people were estimated to have populated this 64 square mile island, fishing reefs some 200 miles away, with an organized central government, and religion that built mammoth stone heads that were moved and erected throughout the island. It was in a word, paradise.

When it was first discovered by Western explorers in on Easter day 1772, it was a barren wasteland with few inhabitants and almost nothing growing. A hundred years later, the once glorious statues were all torn down by the remaining inhabitants and the starving population descended into cannibalism before its extinction.

But how did it come to this? Modern science has unlocked the mystery by proving that the islands inhabitants through overpopulation and over consumption exhausted their resources. All life on the island depended on trees that were used to make canoes for fishing, fires for cooking, structures for living, and for

creating, moving and erecting the huge stone statues. But slowly without noticing the last tree on Easter Island was cut down, and from that moment on their fate was sealed. Leading up to that moment anyone who might have pointed out the problem was dismissed by the vested interests of the hierarchy of politicians, priests, stone masons, and fishermen who's job depended on the deforestation. In the end they ate each other.

The story of Easter Island, the Maya or the Anasazi, should be compellingly clear to us at this point. Because of globalization the whole world has become an island and we can no more escape it than the canoeless native. Our only hope lies in the retelling of the story, and connecting our history to our present because the course we are currently charting is totally unsustainable.

In the end the financial collapse and the failure of GM is more a total rebuke of the American idea of Manifest Destiny, that the whole world and all its resources are exclusively ours for the taking, and becomes a moment for course correction if we will take it. It is a rebuke of the notion that we can live beyond our means, consuming at an unsustainable rate sacrificing long-term investment for short-term gain, piling up debt, destroying the environment, and resting on our past successes believing that our countries noble and historic beginning will continue to save us.

INTERESTING REFERENCES TO HOOVER CARTS

Campaigning for President, Truman had this to say about the Hoover cart:

> "Nowhere in the United States this year have I seen a single exhibit of that famous North Carolina farm invention--that product of ingenuity and hard times, of personal despair and political mockery--the Hoover cart.
>
> You remember the Hoover cart--I didn't find that in Iowa, or anywhere else--the remains of the old tin lizzie being pulled by a mule, because you couldn't afford to buy a new car, you couldn't afford to buy gas for the old one.
>
> You remember. First you had the Hoovercrats, and then you had the Hoover carts. One always follows the other. Bear that in mind now, carefully.
>
> By the way, I asked the Department of Agriculture at Washington about this Hoover cart.
>
> They said it is the only automobile in the world that eats oats. They don't recommend it, and neither do I."

References to Hoover carts also appear several times in To Kill a Mockingbird.

> "Bony mules hitched to Hoover carts flicked flies in the sweltering shade of the live oaks on the square. Men's stiff collars wilted by nine in the morning. Ladies bathed before noon, after their three-o'clock naps, and by nightfall were like soft teacakes with frostings of sweat and sweet talcum."

Perhaps the most thorough accounting of the contraption came from Time magazine Mon. Oct 10, 1932

Back To The Futurama-

A Statement by Jeremy Dean

“In Wayne County, N. C., a depressed farmer cut off the rear end of his disused' automobile, fastened shafts to the axle, backed in a mule, went riding. Other farmers, unable to buy 23c gasoline with 7c cotton or $5 tires with n^ tobacco, did the same. Soon the roads of eastern North Carolina were overrun with similar vehicles pulled by mules, horses, oxen, goats or a pair of husky boys. North Carolinians, many of whom had been Hoovercrats in 1928, transposed two letters of the term, called their conveyances Hoovercarts.*

In Goldsboro, one Gene Roberts, newshawk, promoted a Hoovercart Rodeo as a publicity stunt. Goldsboro entertained its biggest crowd since William Jennings Bryan spoke there 34 years ago. Some 400 Hoovercarts paraded through the town. Streets were jammed. Goldsboro's police and four State highway patrolmen could not untangle the traffic jam. Filling stations did their best day's business in many a month—selling hay. Angry politicians had newsreel photographers barred, pleaded with Newshawk Roberts to publicize the carts as Depression Chariots. It was too late. Signs on the carts proclaimed: HOOVER GOT MY MULE, THE SPIRIT OF HOOVER. One drawn by two oxen announced: WE'LL GET THERE REGARDLESS OF HOOVER AND THIS AIN'T NO BULL. Goldsboro businessmen offered prizes to winners of chariot races, mulecart races, goatcart races; races of carts with pneumatic tires, carts with straw-stuffed tires, carts with no tires at all. A milling company that offered three pounds of grits to each entrant gave away more than 1,000 lb. A cinema theatre issued 300 passes to Horse Feathers.

The fame of Goldsboro's Hoovercart Rodeo spread. Rodeos and parades were held in Oxford (469 entries), in Roxboro, Kinston and Wendell. More & more Hoovercarts appeared on North Carolina roads, spread northward into Virginia. Last week the first one appeared on the streets of Danville (pop. 22,247). Virgilina, Va. organized a Hoovercart parade.”